



baidon horticultural society  
[www.baidonhort.co.uk](http://www.baidonhort.co.uk)



## ALLOTMENT NEWSLETTER MARCH 2021

**Editor - Dawn Tinsley**

**[newsletter@baidonhort.co.uk](mailto:newsletter@baidonhort.co.uk)**

### ***Message from the Chair***

Now is the time of year when we return to our plots and gardens to prepare for the growing season, a time to be optimistic, hopeful and expectant. The Committee is looking forward to some new developments like the installation of solar power at both sites and are hopeful the annual show can go ahead in September.

Now is also the time to reiterate some of the expectations we have of our plotholders and they can have of their Committee. We have the longest waiting list for years and as we cannot increase the size of our sites we must make the best usage we can of them. We will be holding quarterly inspections of all plots and smallholder plots to ensure tenants are maintaining the standards expected in the rules and enforcing these more rigorously, particularly the statutory rule that 75% of a plot should be cultivated after one year. 25% is recognised as the space for paths/sheds/water storage etc.

Could I please ask that anybody who has difficulty in achieving this should ask either Charlotte at Charlestown or Mike at Thompson Lane for help and advice, the Committee will offer support and time to plotholders who are struggling but will begin the termination process for those who are wilfully not

complying with the allotment rules.

I am sorry to be blunt, but we can no longer justify renting plots to people who do not pull their weight especially when we have so many keen people waiting.

I trust you will understand the reasons, our aim is to have the friendliest, best run, most attractive allotments in the District which we can all be proud of.

***John Turner***

### ***Allotment News***

#### **Solar Power in the Allotment Huts.**

We have been given funding by Baidon Town Council to install off grid solar PV systems at both sites. These systems will provide power for lighting in the huts, security lighting and CCTV which will make both allotment sites more secure. Different forms of power supply were investigated and off grid solar is the most cost effective way of providing power in the allotment shops.

***Richard Nottidge***

We have 18 on the waiting list at **Thompson Lane**, 14 for garden and 2 for smallholding plot at **Charlestown**.

Our Annual Horticultural Show will be taking place this year, I will send out details as soon as I can. We are now collecting tombola prizes, these may be dropped off at one of our sales huts on a Sunday morning or message me and I will arrange collection.

[newsletter@baildonhort.co.uk](mailto:newsletter@baildonhort.co.uk)

Please check out our website for membership forms and our current price list, we don't just sell compost we have lots of organic fertiliser on sale too.

<http://www.baildonhort.btck.co.uk/>

We have lots of free seeds, books, magazines, plant pots and cardboard boxes at our Charlestown sales hut. We also have free woodchip and manure.



## Community Plot

During these difficult times we have now got a big waiting list for allotments. To try and help ease this problem we have decided to create a community plot adjacent to the car park.

Having an allotment is good for your health and well being in so many ways. However members sometimes find their plot is too large, as they grow older or perhaps have health problems. Rather than people having to give up altogether the committee felt it would be good to allow people to downsize if they wish by taking on 1 or 2 beds on the community plot along with part of one of the 2 greenhouses on the plot.

This will hopefully enable people to continue with their gardening passion and maintain social contact with fellow plot holders.

If any existing plot holders wish to take advantage of this facility they should let the committee know by mid March.

If we don't get any interest from existing plot holders we will offer those on the waiting list the chance to take up the beds whilst they remain on the list for a full plot.

This will give those who are new to allotments the chance to see if they like it before moving onto their own full plot.

Hopefully as Covid rules relax the community plot will give those with experience the chance to work with new plot holders and share their expertise.

We hope this idea proves a success in helping old hands or new starters to enjoy the benefits of having an allotment.

**Sue Wheatley and Ian Helyar**



## MARCH JOBS

There's lots to be done outside now the slower winter months have passed. Here are the jobs to do in March:

1. Fertilise your beds. Once your soil is workable, dig a 5cm (or more) layer of compost or well-rotted manure into your beds to prepare for the growing season ahead. You can also work in a general-purpose fertiliser, such as pelleted chicken manure, or fish, blood and bone.

2. Put supports in. If any of your garden plants need supporting this year, put them in now, so plants can grow up through them. Adding supports afterwards is trickier and often looks unattractive.

3. Move deciduous trees or shrubs. Now is the time to do this task, provided the soil isn't frozen or waterlogged.

4. Resurface paths before plants start to grow and smother them.

### **In the flower garden**

Feed trees, shrubs and hedges with a slow-release fertiliser by lightly forking it into the soil surface.

Feed roses with special rose feed or balanced fertiliser as they come into growth.

Prune roses now to encourage strong new growth.







Prune clematis - prune early-flowering varieties once their flowers have finished and summer-flowering ones before they start into active growth.

Finish cutting back cornus and salix cultivars, and other shrubs grown for their colourful winter stems. Cut them right back to their bases to encourage new stem growth for next winter.

Cut out the top rosette of leaves from mahonia shrubs after they have flowered, to encourage branching.

Finish cutting back dead foliage from perennials and ornamental grasses to make way for new growth.

Prune overwintered fuchsias back to one or two buds on each shoot. This will encourage a bushy growth habit.

Prune winter-flowering jasmine (*Jasminum nudiflorum*) after flowering, to encourage new growth for next year's blooms. Cut back the previous year's growth to 5cm from the old wood.

Trim winter-flowering heathers as the flowers disappear, to prevent the plants becoming leggy.

Keep an eye out for slugs as the weather warms. Pay special attention to soft, new growth, which slugs love.

Continue to deadhead winter pansies to

stop them setting seed. This will encourage flushes of new flowers throughout the spring.

Deadhead daffodils as the flowers finish and let the foliage die back naturally.

Deadhead hydrangeas before new growth appears. Cut to about one third of last season's growth.

Plant native hedges to encourage wildlife.

### **In the vegetable garden**

Dig in green manures grown over the winter. Do this while stems are still soft.

Dig compost, well-rotted manure or green waste into your vegetable beds to prepare for the growing season ahead.

Dig in a 5cm (or more) layer when the soil becomes workable. Weed vegetable seed beds before adding the layer.

Cover prepared soil with sheets of black plastic to keep it drier and warmer in preparation for planting.

Weed and mulch asparagus beds. Asparagus has shallow roots so weed by hand to prevent damage.

Cut autumn-fruiting raspberry canes to the ground to stimulate new canes, which will fruit in the autumn.

Cut the tips of summer-fruiting raspberry



canes that have grown beyond the top of their supports; cut just above a bud.

Feed blueberry plants with ericaceous plant fertiliser.

Protect the blossoms of apricots, peaches and nectarines from frost with a screen or horticultural fleece.

Mulch fruit trees with well-rotted manure or garden compost. Take care not to mound mulch up around tree trunks.

Cover strawberries with a cloche to encourage earlier fruiting.

Mulch rhubarb with a thick layer of well-rotted manure to keep it healthy and reduce moisture loss through the soil. Take care not to cover the crown, as this is where the growth happens.



***Robin Weedon***





## ***2021 Allotment Competition***

The weather has made it difficult in February to do much on the allotments but now the days are getting longer and spring is round the corner you can start planning for the new growing season.

To give you a bit of inspiration BHS are running our allotment competition again this year with prizes sponsored by the council for both sites and a best newcomer award.

The judging will be marked against the following criteria:

Variety of vegetables, fruit, herbs and flowers. Plot Cleanliness.

Absence of weeds & litter.

Maximising use of space.

Evidence of composting.

Evidence of water conservation.

Encouragement of wildlife, e.g. bee/butterfly plant allures, ponds & insects

Something different to demonstrate individuality and imaginative layout.







In addition the Allotment Officer's Charlotte Martin (Charlestown) and Mike Webster (Thompson Lane) will select the Best Newcomer for a new tenant in their first year of cultivation. All those tenants taking on their plot after 1 August 2020 are eligible for this competition. The winner of the best newcomer will receive a trophy and the next years rent free. There will be a 1st prize for both sites of £50, sponsored by our Landlords (Baildon Town Council), 2nd & 3rd prize are sponsored by Baildon Horticultural Society; both receiving a £10 and £5 voucher to spend in one of our huts.

Please ensure that your plot number is visible or you will not be entered into the competition.

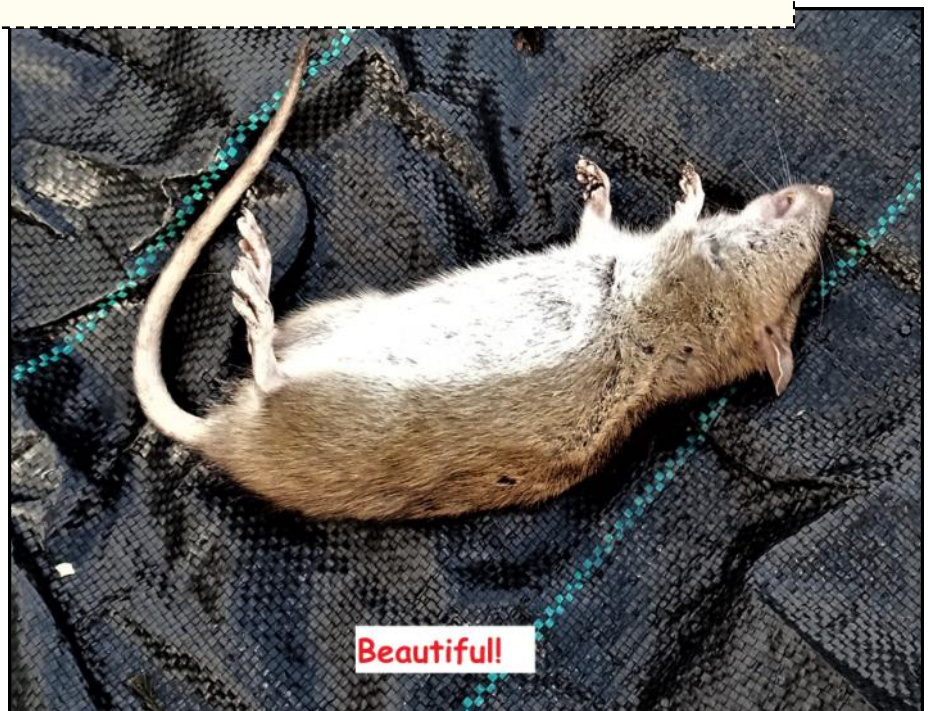


***Watch out there's a sneaky thief about!!***

I caught a rat and took it over to one of the plotholders who I thought might be interested.....



I put the rat down so that it could be admired....







Thief

I only turned my back for a minute and someone stole it and then ran off with it.....



Thief makes off

*Christine Raper*





## Tool, Seed and Plant Give Away or Swap

**FREE MANURE COMPOST**

**FREE PLANT POTS**

Pop along to our Charlestown Sales Hut, any Sunday morning 10am to 11am, where we have a variety of seeds, tools, magazines, plant pots and manure free to all members, not just allotment holders.

Visit our website to browse our Price List

<http://www.baildonhort.btck.co.uk/>

### ***Chicken Jobs for March***



As daylight lengthens, hormones kick in and hens raised as egg-layers start producing again. To lay healthy eggs, they need calcium. As hens come out of winter into spring, make sure they have a good source. Some people feed them back their own shells crushed up or you can use oyster shell as a completely separate supply in case their own shells are already lacking in calcium.

Give your hens the best quality food you can afford. Foraging is fine, but you need to be sure they're getting a balanced diet including necessary vitamins and minerals.

Layer feed is a good choice for all adult hens. You don't have to worry about that balance - it's done for you.

Add two peeled, slightly crushed garlic cloves into chickens' water to boost immunity.

This is the time of year when predators are starting to look for food for their young. And let's face it, chickens are on everyone's lunch menu - baby chicks perhaps even more so. So, this is the time to check that your chicken run and coop are as predator-proof as they can be.

Plan your chicken-friendly veggie and fruit garden - lettuce, kale, spinach, sunflowers and berries are all great for your flock.



***Charlotte Martin***





## Nematodes v Organic Slug Pellets

**A ban on the outdoor use of BLUE, metaldehyde slug pellets is to be introduced across Great Britain from spring 2022, except in permanent greenhouses, in order to better protect wildlife and the environment.**

I've never used blue slug pellets but have tried both organic slug pellets & nematodes. Although nematodes are time consuming more expensive, I've used these for two years now. I find I only need to treat my raised beds in March, this kills the eggs and slugs living within the soil, leaving the wildlife, frogs, bird and hedgehog to eat the slugs later in the growing season. Once I've treated my beds I ensure that my copper tape has no gaps, as the birds like to peck at it over winter!

**Organic slug pellets** are based on ferric phosphate, which according to reports will break down harmlessly to iron and phosphate nutrients after use and do not harm children and pets, birds, hedgehogs & other wildlife, they only kill slugs and snails. They are a poison but are allowed under organic standards because they are made using base chemicals found in nature.

**Nematodes** (*Phasmarhabditis hermaphrodita*) is a natural predator of slugs that look like a microscopic worm which enters the slug and feeds off it from the inside, causing the slug to lose its appetite and eventually die. These are found readily in nature but the nemaslug product allows you to apply a concentrated dose to kill as many slugs as possible in the area you wish to garden.

The advantages of slug pellets is that they have a shelf life, can be pre-ordered and kept in storage ready to use when a situation calls for it.



The disadvantage of nemaslug is that it has no shelf life. The nematodes are bred in a lab, take a few days to reach you once an order is placed and must be used straight away. You must plan when to use it and it needs to be reapplied every six weeks. It kills young slugs living below the surface of the soil (90% of the population) but not the big ones on top. Because it is a soil based nematode it also does not kill most snails, which live above the soil. Slugs can be particularly harmful to potatoes and other root crops.

Slug pellets on the other hand kill those slugs and snails that are moving about above the surface. They work because they contain an ingredient which slugs find attractive. Slugs eat the pellet, not suspecting that it contains poison.

I prefer to leave these slugs for the wildlife!

### **How to use nematodes:**

Water the soil before applying the nematodes, follow the manufacturer's instructions so that you obtain the correct ratio of nematodes to water.

Spray nematodes with plenty of water, otherwise the nematodes will not be able to move and will slowly die.

After three to eight weeks, you can expect a decline in the slug population. Nematodes are very sensitive to light, with direct UV radiation, they die quickly. This is why they don't stay on the surface, but quickly crawl inside the soil. The application should, therefore, take place in the evening or when the sky is overcast, at temperatures below 50 degrees Fahrenheit (10° Celsius), the parasites become inactive. At temperatures of 54 degrees Fahrenheit and higher (12° Celsius), they begin to feel comfortable. Temperatures should not rise above 77 degrees Fahrenheit (25° Celsius).

***Dawn Tinsley***



# SUPPORTING WILDLIFE

It may seem like spring has sprung, but while bulbs are blooming and birds are singing, March can actually be quite a difficult time for garden wildlife.

Temperatures in March can still fall well below zero at night, so invertebrates such as earthworms, beetles and caterpillars may still be taking shelter. Garden birds will have eaten all but the last of the berries, and with less invertebrate food available, they can often go hungry, just at a time when they need to be in good condition for breeding.



March is the key month for breeding amphibians. Frogs start breeding first, laying clumps of jelly-like spawn at the pond edge, joined by toads a couple of weeks later. Toads tend to breed in larger ponds than frogs, and are more likely to return to 'ancestral' pond sites. They lay 'ribbons' of spawn around the stems of submerged plant such as marsh marigold.

Visit the link for a step by step guide on **how to build a pond** in you garden or allotment.

I've had my pond now for 3 years and am practically slug free!

<https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/actions/how-build-pond>



Hedgehogs are emerging from hibernation in March, and need to build up their fat reserves for breeding. Put out the food (meat-based cat or dog food, chicken flavour is best, in jelly not gravy) from dusk and discard any that's left first thing in the morning, don't forget to leave out fresh water too. (not milk as this harms hedgehogs).

<https://www.hedgehogstreet.org/help-hedgehogs/>

## How to build a hedgehog house:

<https://www.hedgehogstreet.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Hedgehog-Street-Hedgehog-houses-instructions-2018.pdf>

Continue to feed birds calorie-rich food such as sunflower heart, fat balls and suet nibbles, to help them prepare for breeding. Avoid peanuts as there's a small chance adult birds will feed them to their young, which can choke them.

## Gather lawn clippings

If mowing for the first time leave the clippings to dry out, then move them to a dry corner of the garden. You may encourage a queen bumblebee to start a colony there.

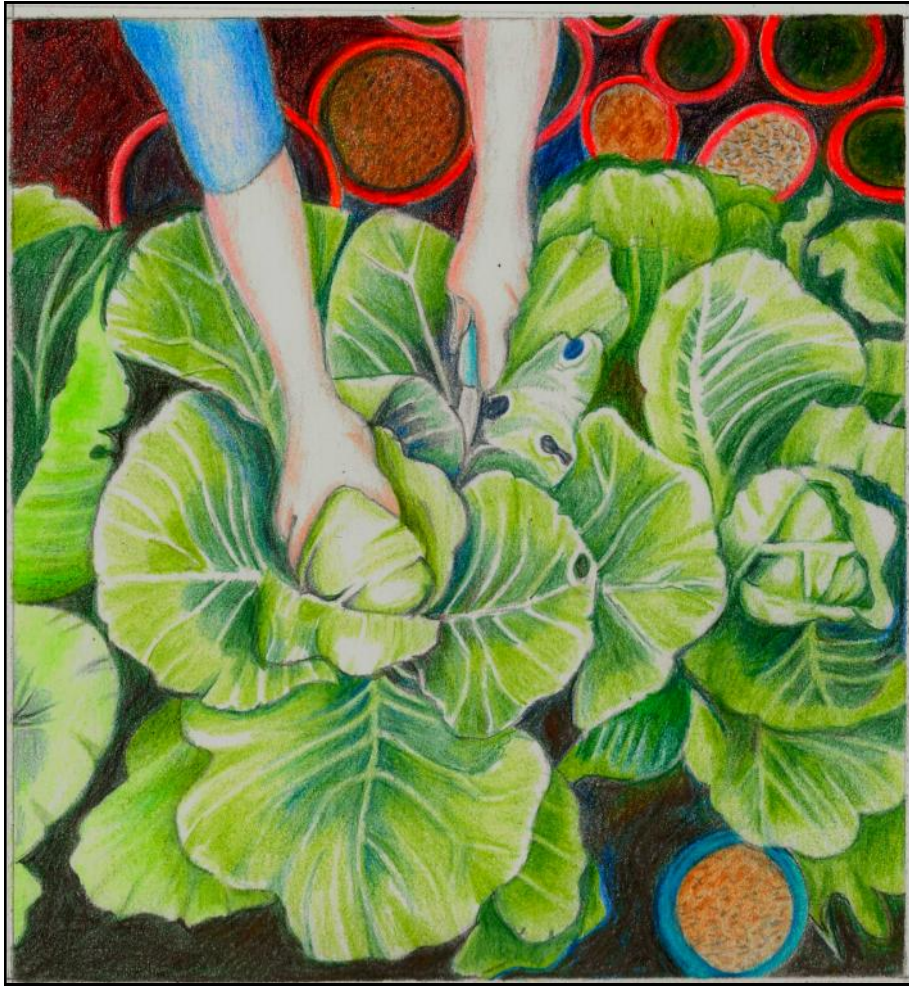


<https://www.nsalg.org.uk/allotment-info/hens-bees-and-other-animals-bees-and-other-pollinators/>

**Dawn Tinsley**



# ***St James Art Group, Baildon***



***By Andrew Gregory***





## WHO HAS SEEN THE WIND?

Who has seen the wind?

Neither I nor you:

But when the leaves hang trembling

The wind is passing thro'.

Who has seen the wind?

Neither you nor I:

But when the trees bow down their heads

The wind is passing by.

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI, English, 1830–1894



***By Jackie Gregory***

## ***Pruning My Fruit Trees...***

Every morning, our breakfast includes a bowl of fruit, at one time bought from the supermarket, local shop or maybe, following a visit to a farm shop. Around 10 years ago now, sitting at the breakfast table and sampling the delights of that morning's bowl, I said, "Wouldn't it be great if, for at least some days in the year, we could eat our own, home grown fruit...?"

That was in pre-allotment time, so space in our garden at home was a consideration. We didn't really have room for mature fruit trees, so I looked for 'patio-sized' varieties and bought a collection of 5 mini-bush trees on-line, from Blackmoor Nurseries: Apple – 'Sun Red'; Pear – 'Garden Glory'; Apricot – 'Aprigold'; Peach – 'Crimson Bonfire'; and Morello Cherry – 'Velvet Taste'. These were planted into large pots, in John Innes No.3 compost.



Each year since then, I have top-dressed the pots, scraping off a few inches of old compost and adding a new layer; I have also fed the trees during the growing period. Over the years, the performance of each tree has been really varied. The most successful has been the peach, which apart from last year, when it was suffering from the after effects of an attack of 'red spider mite', has been pretty consistent in producing around 10 fruits



and the deep-red foliage is an added bonus! The least successful has been the



apricot, which in 9 years, has produced 7 fruits in total, all of these in 2019. In 2020, despite keeping it protected in the polytunnel, providing it with a fleece covering in frosty periods and diligently hand-pollinating it on a regular basis, it was back to zero production. Hmmm...! Apricots are notoriously difficult to grow in the North but not to be beaten, I bought another dwarf tree a couple of years ago – (var. 'Isabelle') – in order to have another go. Unfortunately, 'Isabelle' succumbed to something unidentified and is no more, so for the moment, I have decided that apricots, wonderful fruits though they are, are not for me!





Fast forward a few years from those early days and my collection of fruit trees has expanded – a lot! – and our breakfast table has seen a much wider variety of home and allotment grown produce, from the usual strawberries and raspberries,

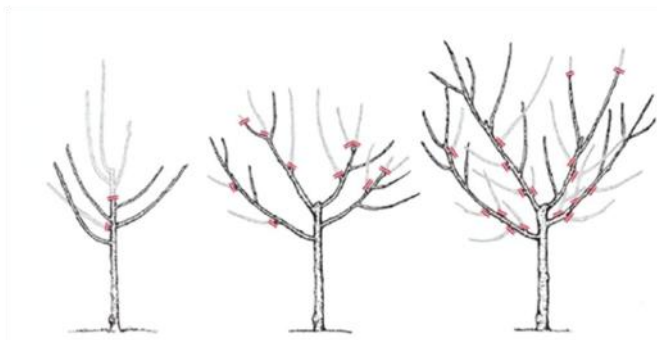


through to what I like to think are the more exotic – grapes, figs and persimmons! Most of these are still grown in pots in the polytunnel or outside, although when I moved onto my current plot in 2018, I inherited a couple of large apple trees – (var. 'Sunset' and 'James Grieve'.) These are about 30 years old and although I had a stab at pruning them last year, they are in serious need of a good 'fettling' as we say in Yorkshire!

Which leads me nicely to the title of this month's article – about time, I hear you say!

The thing with pruning fruit trees is that if you get it wrong, you can wipe out a year's production, either by pruning at the wrong time or by pruning out the very 'fruiting wood' on which the year's fruit depends. No pressure then...!

As my fruit tree collection has grown, so has the amount of pruning information my brain needs to hold in order to maximise production from each tree! In last month's article, I mentioned how useful a mobile phone camera was for recording images; well, I also use mine extensively when on my plot, to search for information and videos to help me with pruning! One important point I have to bear in mind though, is where a particular video was filmed. The climate in, say, parts of the US or Australia, can be far different from our own, so what may be a good time to prune there, might not be a good time here!



In the early stages of a tree's life, getting the overall shape right is crucial, encouraging the tree, with careful pruning, into a 'goblet shape' – this keeps the centre of the tree open to let in more light – while trying to get a good balance of branches around the tree. Pruning and training for an 'espalier'

or 'cordon' grown tree is different however. Because of limited space and the need to consider other plot holders, the planting of new trees does require the permission of the allotment officers, so if you are considering planting new fruit

tree, seek guidance first!

Most of the fruit trees I have are on dwarf root stocks and are in large pots. I do have three planted in the ground – also on dwarf root stocks and with permission!



– with a view to practising different pruning techniques. One of these is a plum first (var. 'Opal') a duplicate of which I also have in a pot. (When I received it back in 2016, the tree was damaged, so the grower – Tree Shop Ltd – sent a replacement. I kept the original, albeit a little mis-shapen, which is why I have two.) The interesting thing is that last year, the one in the ground had a lot more vegetative growth on it but the one in the pot, produced more fruiting buds and fruit. It is early days for both of them, so the jury is still out but already the pot grown one, which I have now moved into the polytunnel, has way more fruiting buds than the other; and the ability to move it under cover means it will get an earlier start and the birds will be kept off!

When pruning, the fruiting pattern of each tree has to be borne in mind. For example, 'fruiting wood' can be the current year's growth, as with figs and grapes; the previous year's growth, as with peaches and nectarines; or even older wood, as with apples, pears and plums. "Seemples...!"

When to prune which type of tree, is also important. Young apples and pears, for example, can be pruned twice during the year, firstly in Winter when the tree is dormant, to develop the shape of the tree and secondly in Summer, to keep the tree within bounds and to slow down vegetative growth. However, if you prune a plum tree in Winter, there is a risk of the tree contracting 'silver leaf' disease, which can spread quickly throughout the tree, causing severe damage. Young plums, as with most 'stone fruit', should be pruned in late Spring, to establish the overall shape of the tree and then again in Summer, cutting back side-shoots that are not needed for the permanent framework. Apricots should be pruned in a similar manner.





If, like me you have inherited a mature tree – or two! – which is in need of more serious pruning, [the RHS site has plenty of advice](#) plus a short video on the subject. I started to prune mine last year but backed away from what seemed to be an enormous task. They hadn't been pruned in years and although productive, were a mass of criss-crossed

branches. The temptation is to prune a bit here and prune a bit there, so as not to reduce the apple harvest in the Autumn but ultimately, this is not a good idea. For a start, the apples will get smaller and a lot harder to pick, there will be so many. Also, air will not be able to circulate through the mass of branches, increasing the potential for disease. Better a short-term loss for a long-term gain, with a more open structure. If there is a lot of pruning to do, as in my case, it is better to undertake this over a few years, so as not to shock the tree too much.



In the September 2020 Newsletter, I suggested to some of my fellow allotment holders that if they could squeeze in a potted fig tree, they wouldn't be disappointed! Figs are very easy to maintain, don't take up a lot of space and can provide luscious, fresh figs into the bargain – a great addition to

a bowl of breakfast fruit and, I still think, pretty exotic! The thing to remember about figs is, 'no new growth, no new figs' – as they fruit on wood produced the same year. Like most of the other trees I have mentioned, the object is to aim for an open centred bush – unless you decide to train it into a fan shape. With a newly purchased tree, with three or four branches rising from the base to, say, 2' high, prune these back in the



first Winter, to around half their length. This will encourage further branches to form, in order to establish a basic framework. Each year in Winter, remove any crossing branches and any lengths of bare wood should be cut back to one bud. In my experience, figs are very forgiving and will respond well to vigorous pruning and as I said at the beginning, 'no new growth, no new figs'! They are perfect for pot growing, as restricting the roots, actually encourages fruiting; and there are plenty to choose from, the most popular variety in the UK being 'Brown Turkey'. However, there are plenty of other varieties, so if you are considering a fig, do a bit of research first.



In the October 2020 Newsletter, I wrote an article about growing grapes, which included some photos and a description of the pruning method I use. I know quite a few allotment holders have a grape vine or two but for those still wondering whether to have a stab at growing grapes, you *can* get a good crop in a relatively small space; and pruning isn't as complicated as you might think when consulting books and magazines. If I can crack it, anyone can!



Three years ago, I added a Dwarf Sweet Cherry – 'Stella' – to my collection. In 2020, it had just one cherry on it but this year, there looks to be a lot of fruiting buds on the tree which will hopefully turn into fat, juicy cherries! Sweet cherries fruit on one and two-year old wood and on spurs of older wood, so pruning needs to encourage a balance of older fruiting wood and younger replacement branches. As with other 'stone' fruits – unlike those which have pips, such as apples and pears – cherries should not be pruned in Winter. This will minimise the risk of infection by 'silver leaf' disease or bacterial canker. Light formative pruning can be carried out in spring as the leaves start to develop, but the time to prune established trees is in early to mid-summer.



**CAUTION  
HEAVY**

Of course, even if you get all of this right, fruiting relies on successful pollination of the blossom, so consideration needs to be given as to whether trees are 'self-fertile' and can produce fruit on their own, or whether they need a different variety of the same type of tree as a pollinator in order to bear fruit. Trees grown outside are less of a problem than those grown under cover, as pollinators are far more likely to have visited different varieties of the same tree out in the open. However, the beauty of growing trees in pots, is that these can be moved outside as the blossom develops,





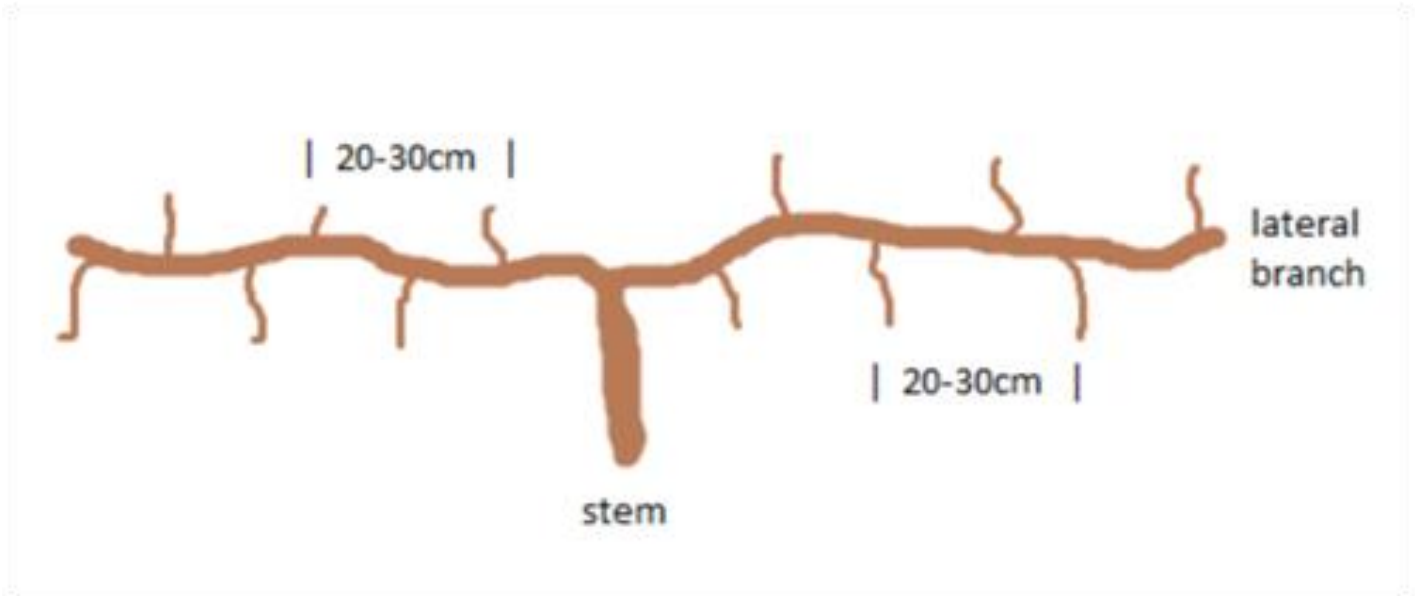
Since that breakfast, 10 years ago and in addition to the trees mentioned above, I bought a persimmon tree in 2018, from which I harvested four luscious fruits in 2020. The tree is still quite small, so I was amazed that I had any fruit at all! At first, 15 strange looking blossoms emerged, which were pollinated successfully. As the fruits grew larger, one by one they started to drop from the tree. However, 4 remained, to ripen into the most delicious tasting fruit,

the last of which was harvested as late as 2<sup>nd</sup> December! Persimmon wood is brittle and if the branches are allowed to get too long, they are prone to snapping under the weight of fruit. The tree once established, fruits from new growth which arises from the last few buds of the previous season's growth, so if all of the new branches produced in the last season are pruned away, this will effectively remove all of the fruiting wood! So, I have left some of the shorter new



growth unpruned, which will hopefully produce the fruit for this year. The longer new growth has been pruned back to a few buds from the main branch which should produce more shorter branches, which will be the fruiting wood in a couple of years' time. Well, that's the plan!

A couple of years ago, I experimented with a Kiwi Vine – 'Jenny' – a variety which is self-fertile. Packed full of antioxidants, kiwi fruit contain almost twice as much vitamin C as an orange. They're also rich in vitamin K and vitamin E, so this 'super-fruit' seemed to be a must for our breakfast table! Kiwi vines are actually quite hardy and many varieties will grow in the UK. However, my first foray into growing one ended in failure, due I think, to an attack by the dreaded vine weevil! Not to be beaten, I bought another one of the same variety last year, along with a Kiwi 'Issai', which bears much smaller fruits, the size of a grape.



Kiwis will start to produce fruit three to four years after planting and can be grown in a similar manner to grapes, along horizontal canes or wires. The best time to prune a Kiwi is early to mid-Winter. In the first season, the objective is to develop a straight trunk to the top of its support.

During the second season, permanent side branches or cordons should be established and these tied down. In the third season, pruning should create a framework with fruiting canes growing every 20-30cm. At that point, the fun can begin...! I am just at the start of my kiwi journey, so will report back from time to time with an update on progress...

With fruit trees, you have to play the long game and play by the pruning rules – but the rewards are surely worth it; and in addition to supplementing our breakfast table, I have learned so much about a subject I knew very little about, 10 years ago!

***Chris Dearnley, Plot 11E/W, Thompson Lane***





Although it might not feel like it, spring is around the corner and we all look forward to enjoying our gardens and outside spaces. Whether you're a keen gardener or someone who just dabbles, you are likely to need some compost.

This year Climate Action Ilkley, together with Ilkley Town Council and our partner organisations, are calling on local residents to **stop using peat-based compost.**

Why? You may not know it but harvesting peat does serious environmental damage. Intact peat bogs are fantastic carbon stores and wonderful wildlife havens. By retaining water, they also help prevent flooding and wildfires. For more information click [here](#)

In November 2020, Monty Don, of BBC's Gardeners World, and all the major UK environmental charities wrote to the government calling for *"a total ban on peat in compost - on its extraction within the UK, its import, export, and sale - in both the retail and professional sectors, by 2025 at the latest"*.

Please don't wait. Give up peat-based compost now!

What can you use instead? Many peat-free composts are just as good as those based on peat. To help you choose, we've produced a simple [buyer's guide](#) to peat-free compost including a list of local stockists. This will be updated regularly.

Work is already underway to restore our own peat bogs on Ilkley Moor. Let's protect bogs everywhere by leaving the remaining peat where it is.

Please check out [Other Ways to Help](#)

***Climate Action Ilkley***



The bees have been busy taking in snowdrop pollen which is bright orange and a vital food for the young brood. Seeing them taking it into their hives is a sure sign that all is well inside and the queen is producing lots of young. It's far too early to look inside the hive yet. That will have to wait until there is a nectar flow (which usually starts with the flowering currant) but from what I can see all looks well and they've been out and about enjoying the unseasonably good weather. Since taking this photograph I have taken the mouseguards off as the small holes can sometimes strip that lovely pollen off their little legs as they enter the hive and they need every little bit of it at this time of year.

## **Some More Remarkable Facts about Honeybees**

Honeybees have five eyes: a large compound eye on either side of their head and three small eyes (ocelli) on the top of their head that act as a navigation system. They see in colour but are most sensitive to the blue end of the spectrum and into ultraviolet. Hairs between the compound lenses detect wind conditions, helping them to stay on course.

An individual honeybee visits 100 or more flowers in a single foraging trip. Unlike many other pollinators, honeybees will only forage on a single type of flower in any one trip.

Flowers give off positive electrical charges for some time after being visited by a bee and the bees also leave a chemical "footprint". These and additional signals alert other pollinators not to bother visiting that bloom for nectar at that time.

Honeybees will visit about two million flowers and fly around 80,000 km (50,000 miles) to make a 454g (1 lb) jar of honey.





During its entire lifetime, a single foraging bee will collect enough nectar to make one-twelfth of a teaspoon of honey.

The normal top speed of a worker bee is around 24-32 km (15-20 mph) when flying to a food source and about 19km (12 mph) when returning fully laden. The "buzz" that a bee makes is the sound of its wings which beat up to 16,000 times per minute.

Year round the bees keep the core temperature at between 32°C and 35°C (90° and 95° F. In hot weather they dispel heat by fanning their wings. In winter they isolate their flight muscles, using them to generate heat through "shivering" without wing motion.

In high summer a busy hive can contain as many as 70,000 female worker bees, plus the queen and several thousand drones (males). In winter the colony will drop to about a quarter of its summer size.

Spring and summer-born worker bees perform a series of predetermined jobs during their five to six week lifespan. However, bees born in the autumn will live through the winter until spring). In the first three weeks of their lives they progress from cleaning the comb and feeding the larvae to receiving pollen and nectar from incoming bees. Other jobs include beeswax production. Only in the last 3 weeks of their lives do they leave the hive to work as a forager.

Bees do not hibernate. In autumn the female workers throw the drones out of the hive to avoid feeding them through the winter. The remaining colony clusters around the queen and will fly when the outside temperature is above 10°C (50°F).

Drones die in the process of mating which takes place in flight. The queen makes just one nuptial trip in her life, during the course of which she will mate with many drones. She collects a lifetime supply of sperm which she stores in her abdomen.

The queen is larger than the workers and has a fertile life of three to four years. Her key function is to lay eggs, which she does mainly in the spring and early summer, peaking at the summer solstice in June, when she might be laying as many as 2,000 eggs a day. As she is unable to care for herself, attendant bees follow her round to feed her, groom her and take away her waste.

Every queen has her own unique pheromone "signature" which is spread throughout the hive from bee to bee. Amongst their many functions, her pheromones act as a "password" so that intruder bees from other hives can quickly be recognised.

***Louise Mallinson***



Baildon Tree Partnership has now received funding approval from DEFRA for a tree planting scheme between Roberts Park and Baildon Rec. The planting was due to take place this Spring but has been delayed due to Covid19. Planting will instead take place at the end of this year, dates to be confirmed nearer the time.

In the meantime we are expanding our tree nursery at Thompson Lane so if you have any young saplings ready to move we can look after them until we are ready to plant. Please contact Richard Nottidge at [rnottidge@aol.com](mailto:rnottidge@aol.com).



# ***Readers' Recipes***



**Autumn Cake**

## **Ingredients**

100 grams walnuts chopped  
2 apples, diced  
100 ml vegetable oil  
300 grams flour  
200 grams sugar  
100 grams raisins, soaked  
3 Eggs  
35 grams dark rum  
65 ml water  
16 grams baking powder  
Icing sugar to dust

## **Method**

Mix all the ingredients together, adding the walnuts, apples and rinsed raisins last. Bake at 170° for 40/45 min.

When cooled dust it with icing sugar.

***Alessandra Nappo Oddy***



**Artichokes with pasta**

## **Ingredients**

4 to 4 Artichokes  
2 tbsp olive oil  
1/2 cloves garlic  
10/12 black olives  
Parmesan  
Parsley  
Chilli 🌶️

## **Method**

Fry garlic, chilli and parsley for few minutes then add the artichokes, cover with the lid on low heat.

Meanwhile cook pasta according with the instructions, add some water from pasta to the sauce if needed.

Drain the pasta and add to the artichokes sauce, sprinkle with parmesan, stir for a couple of minutes & serve with fresh parsley.

***Alessandra Nappo Oddy***

## Onion bhajis



### ***Ingredients***

150 (5oz) gram flour  
1 tsp turmeric  
1 tsp paprika  
1 tsp ground coriander  
1 tsp ground cumin  
1 tsp fennel seeds  
1 bunch coriander  
4 white onions, finely sliced

### ***Method***

Half fill a large pan with vegetable oil and

heat to 175°C.

In a mixing bowl, stir together the gram flour, all the spices and the chopped coriander. Season to taste. Pour in 150ml (1/4pt) cold water, whisking as you go, until you have a thick, gloopy paste.

Toss the sliced onions in the batter, and then use tongs to carefully lower small blobs of the onion mixture into the oil. Fry for 3-4 minutes, turning them in the oil every so often, until they are golden and crisp.

Use a slotted spoon to remove and drain on kitchen roll.

***Julie Pickard***



### ***Ingredients***

140g wholemeal flour  
140g plain flour, plus extra for dusting  
1 tsp salt  
2 tbsp olive oil, plus extra for greasing  
180ml hot water or as needed

### ***Method***

In a large bowl, stir together the flours and salt.

Use a wooden spoon to stir in the olive oil and enough water to make a soft dough that is elastic but not sticky.

Knead the dough on a lightly floured surface for 5-10 minutes until it is smooth. Divide into pieces, roll into balls and let them rest for a few minutes.

Roll out the balls of dough until very thin like a tortilla.

Grease and heat a frying pan over medium heat until hot. When the pan starts smoking, put a chapatti on it. Cook until the underside has brown spots, about 30 seconds, then flip and cook on the other side. Put on a plate and keep warm while you cook the rest of the chapattis.

***Julie Pickard***